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Before the  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of )

Comments on Notice )  
Of Proposed Rule Making )  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

**WT Docket No. 98-143**

To: The Secretary

**COMMENTS OF**

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## **COMMENTS AND PERSONAL OPINION**

The following are the comments and personal opinion of the undersigned:

Having held an Amateur Radio License for over 40 years and presently the holder of an Amateur Extra Class License, I feel that the proposed Rulemaking is a step in the right direction but does not go far enough in some areas.

### **Privatization**

In the area of privatization, I feel the Commission proposal is attempting to deputize civilians in its enforcement procedures and in effect making a legalized vigilante group. With the Commission's recent change of enforcement from one bureau to another, the enforcement procedures should improve. Also, a few publicized enforcement actions would go a long way to improve the actions of a few "bad apples".

### **Telegraphy Examinations**

On the question of Telegraphy Examination Requirements, the Commission should, to the maximum extent permissible under Treaty, eliminate the requirements for the Morse Code examination. As the Commission states in its discussions, the role of telegraphy in communications is decreasing. The Commission has eliminated all Morse Code examination requirements for the use of all

frequencies above 30 MHz. For frequencies below 30 MHz, the Morse Code examination requirements should be limited to a maximum of five words per minute. In addition, the Commission should prepare to eliminate the requirements for Morse Code proficiency when the World Radio Conference eliminates the requirement for Morse Code proficiency.

Requiring proficiency in the sending and receiving of Morse Code is analogous to a State's requiring all applicants for driver's licenses not only to take their driving road test in a vehicle with a standard transmission, but that the standard transmission **not be equipped with synchronizing gears**. (If you do not know what this means, ask your father, grandfather or a truck driver.) For general communications purposes, Morse Code has lost its necessity. This is not to say that portions of the Amateur Bands should not be reserved for non-voice forms of communications or that the use of Morse Code should be prohibited. Those that wish to do so should be allowed the use this communications mode and should have a small segment of the Amateur Band reserved. These Band sub-bands would preclude the need to operate Morse Code adjacent or intermingled with voice communications.

### **Levels of Morse Proficiency**

Only one level of Morse Code proficiency should be required at this time and when International Regulations allow, this

requirement should be eliminated. Also, the elimination or reduction of the requirements for the proficiency in Morse Code will eliminate the requirements for doctor's certification, solving this problem.

### **Examination Type**

The examination should continue to be a fill in the blank type of exam. This is due to the fact that at times, it is quite difficult to read someone else's writing. In the late 1950's, I failed an Amateur Code Test not because of the solid minute required at that time was wrong, but because the Commission Examiner could not read my writing.

### **Written Exams**

In the area of written examinations, the examination currently appears adequate. If any changes are made, an expansion in the areas of operation and on-air practices might be increased somewhat.

### **License Classes**

In the area of the number of Classes of Amateur Licenses, I feel that even four Classes of License are too many. The Commission should seriously consider reducing the number of Classes to not more than three. One Class of License would be a VHF License, not requiring the Morse Code examination, similar to or identical with the existing Technician Class Amateur License.

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The other two Classes of License should require a maximum of five words per minute until International Treaty eliminates this requirement. The first License should consist of a license similar to the General Class License in privileges. The second Amateur License should supply expanded privileges with no additional code test similar to the Amateur Extra Class License.

Also, it is my opinion that the Commission should retain the names of the License Classes and not resort to letter grades as was used in the 1940's and early 1950's. This costs the Commission nothing additional and gives the License holder a name that can be commonly understood for their Class of License.

### **Conclusion**

I am sure that the Commission will receive comments from both the American Radio Relay League and the Quarter Century Wireless Association. I am not a member of the American Radio Relay League and the American Radio Relay League **does not represent me, or the majority of the Amateurs in the US.** I am a member of the Quarter Century Wireless Association, however, it is my opinion that the Commission and the Amateur community in general, should be looking forward, not backwards and the QCWA does not represent me in this area.

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In conclusion, I recommend that enforcement be retained with the Commission, that the maximum Morse Code Examination be at five words per minute, and that there be three Classes of Licenses – one no code for above 30 MHz and two Classes of License for frequencies below 30 MHz both requiring five words per minute and having an additional theory test only for full privileges. I also recommend that the Commission retain the same or similar names of Classes of License and not assign the Classes by letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jay W. Underdown".

Jay W. Underdown, W0PS

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